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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to answer questions about cooperation/collaboration between Head Start and local school districts. Relevant sections of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the regulations implementing it are cited, along with regulations of the Department of Health and Human Services concerning the Head Start program, and Arizona regulations. These regulations focus on least restrictive environments, continuum of alternative placements, school district responsibility for provision of a free appropriate public education, and public agency responsibility for paying costs of special education and related services. Guidelines are offered for making decisions concerning mainstreaming and for using the Individualized Education Program in placement decisions. Information is also presented on determining eligibility for federal and state funds for children who receive special education services within a Head Start program. The guide contends that Head Start provides some services which school districts do not generally provide, and offers an opportunity for school districts to expand the continuum of placement options. Cooperation between Head Start and local education agencies is seen as yielding programmatic benefits to children and families, fiscal benefits, and compliance benefits. An appendix contains a sample memorandum of understanding and suggestions for collaboration between Head Start programs and local school districts. (JDD)

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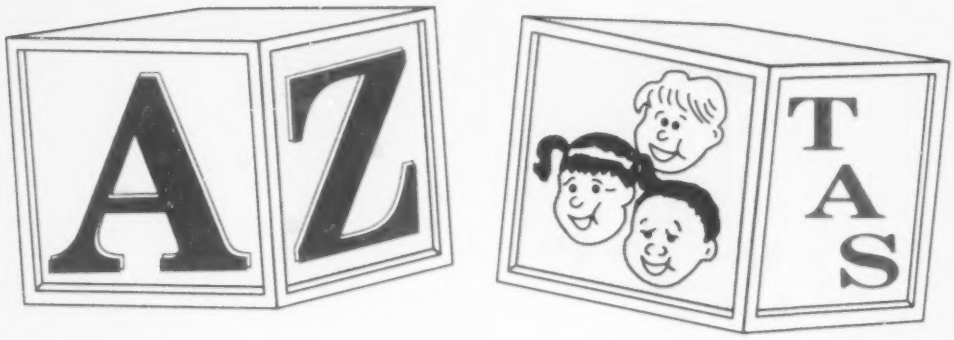

Themes & Issues

A Series of Topical Papers on Special Education

Head Start/LEA Cooperation - Why?

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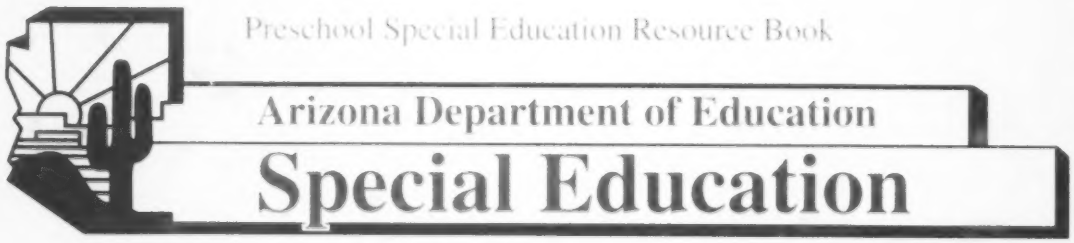

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Head Start/LEA Cooperation - Why?

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Introduction

The passage of the amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) in 1986 (PL 99-457) changed the relationships between local Head Start programs and local education agencies (LEAs). By extending the mandated age of the EHA down to three, congress made clear that **all** preschool children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education under the supervision of the state education agency. While Head Start has always had a mandate to serve children with disabilities, the issuance of the Head Start disability regulations in 1993 reinforced the collaborative nature of that responsibility. Thus, Head Start programs and school districts are now called upon to join together in the provision of services.

The Arizona experience indicates that there are multiple ways through which this cooperation can take place. Some Head Start/LEA dyads share physical space, teaching staff, planning time, and staff development. Others have less integrated environments but have shared instructional responsibilities. And still others are just beginning the collaboration process.

This AZ-TAS publication is designed to answer some of the initial questions that have been raised about the cooperation/collaboration between Head Start and local school districts. As the systems change and modify in response to this new relationship, additional questions, raised by Head Starts and LEAs alike, will require attention.

Head Start/LEA Cooperation

Why Must We?

Because the Federal government says...

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

Section 1414. Application

(a) Requisite features (Quoted in part)

A local education agency...which desires to receive payments under § 1411(d) of this title for any fiscal year shall submit an application to the appropriate State educational agency. Such application shall --

(1) provide satisfactory assurance that payments under this subchapter will be used for excess costs directly attributable to programs which --

(A) provide that all children residing within the jurisdiction of the local educational agency...who are disabled, regardless of the severity of their disability, and are in need of special education and related services will be identified, located, and evaluated, and provide for the inclusion of a practical method of determining which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services and which children are not currently receiving such education and services;

and

(C) establish a goal of providing full educational opportunities to all children with disabilities, including -

(iv) to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with the provisions of § 1412(5)(B) of this title, the provision of special services to enable such children to participate in regular educational programs;

PL 101-476 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT REGULATIONS (34 CFR PART 300)

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (Quoted in part) (§ 300.550)

(b) Each public agency shall insure:

(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and

(2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [20 U.S.C.1412(5)(B); 1414(a)(1)(C)(iv)]

CONTINUUM OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS (§ 300.551)

(a) Each public agency shall insure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

(b) The continuum required in paragraph (a) of this section must:

(1) Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under § 300.17 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and

(2) Make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement. [20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B)]

PLACEMENTS (§ 300.552)

Each public agency shall insure that:

(a) The educational placement of each child with a disability:

(1) Is determined at least annually;

(2) Is based on his or her individualized educational program; and

(3) Is as close as possible to the child's home;

(b) The various alternative placements included at § 300.551 are available to the extent necessary to implement the individualized educational program for each child with a disability.

(c) Unless the individualized educational program of a child with a disability requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled.

(d) In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs. [20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B)]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - HEAD START PROGRAM FINAL RULE (45 CFR 1308 APPENDIX)

Guidance(a): In order to develop an effective disabilities service plan, the responsible staff members need to understand the context in which a grantee operates. The Head Start program has operated under a Congressional mandate since 1972 to make available, at a minimum, ten percent of its enrollment opportunities to children with disabilities. Head Start has exceeded this mandate and serves children in integrated, developmentally appropriate programs. The passage of the IDEA, formerly EHA, and its amendments, affects Head Start, causing a shift in the nature of Head Start's responsibilities for providing services for children with disabilities relative to the responsibilities of State Education Agencies (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEA).

Grantees need to be aware that under the IDEA, the SEA has the responsibility for assuring the availability of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities within the legally required age range in the State. This responsibility includes general supervision of educational programs in all agencies, including monitoring and evaluating the special education and related services to insure that they meet State standards, developing a comprehensive State plan for services for children with disabilities (including a description of interagency coordination among these agencies), and providing a Comprehensive System for Personnel Development related to training needs of all special education and related service personnel involved in the education of children with disabilities served by these agencies, including Head Start programs.

Each State has in effect under IDEA a policy assuring all children with disabilities beginning at least at age three, including those in public or private institutions or other care facilities, the right to a free appropriate education and to an evaluation meeting established procedures. Head Start is either

- The agency through which the LEA can meet its obligation to make a free appropriate public education available through a contract, State or local collaborative agreement, or other arrangement; or

- The agency in which the family chooses to have the child served rather than using LEA services.

Regardless of how a child is placed in Head Start, the LEA is responsible for the identification, evaluation, and provision of a free appropriate public education for a child found to be in need of special education and related services which are mandated in the State. The LEA is responsible for ensuring that these services are provided, but not for providing them all. IDEA stresses the role of multiple agencies and requires their maintenance of effort.

The Head Start responsibility is to make available directly or in cooperation with other agencies services in the least restrictive environment in accordance with an IEP for at least ten percent of enrolled children who meet the disabilities eligibility criteria.

OSEP MEMORANDUM #89-23: PLACEMENT OF PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPS IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Question: Many questions pertain to providing special education and related services in the least restrictive environment when programs for non-handicapped children in the same age range are not provided by public schools.

Response: There is a variety of placements that can meet the needs of preschool children with handicaps and the continuum of alternative placements required under 34 CFR 300.551 must include the alternative placements. For public agencies that do not operate preschool programs for non-handicapped preschool children, some alternative methods for meeting the requirements under 34 CFR 300.550-300.556 include (1) children with handicaps in other preschool programs operated by public agencies (such as Head Start), (2) placing children with handicaps in private school

programs for non-handicapped preschool children or private school preschool programs that integrate children with handicaps and non-handicapped children, (3) locating classes for preschool children with handicaps in regular elementary schools. The public agency responsible for the special education and related services for a child must ensure that the placement is based upon the individualized education program and meets the unique needs of the child.

Question: How can a public agency determine which costs it must pay?

Response: These questions highlight the individualized nature of each placement as set forth in the individualized education program. There is no "yes" or "no" answer; rather, the answer must be derived from considering multiple Part B requirements. 1. Multidisciplinary evaluations. 2. Placement procedures under 34 CFR 300.533, the group of persons making the placement decision must draw on and carefully consider information from a variety of sources. The placement decision must be made in accordance with the LRE requirements. 3. IEP requirements. The public agency responsible for providing FAPE to the child is responsible for ensuring that all the costs associated with the special education and related services contained in the IEP are at no cost to parents whether placement is in a program operated by the LEA, another public agency, or in a private facility such as private nursery schools, private preschools, or day care centers. Transportation must be provided if it is a related services contained in the IEP. An agency may use whatever State, local, Federal, and private sources of support are available to pay for required services. See 34 CFR 300.301(a).

Because the State says...

ARS § 15-771. PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN; DEFINITION

A. Each school district shall make available an educational program for preschool children with disabilities who reside in the school district and who are not already receiving services that have been provided through the department of education.

D. All school districts shall cooperate, if appropriate, with community organizations that provide services to preschool children with disabilities in the provision of the district's preschool program for children with disabilities.

ARS § 15-901. DEFINITIONS

A. In this title, unless the context otherwise requires:

2. (a). "Fractional student" means:

(i) For common schools, a preschool handicapped pupil at least three years of age and enrolled in a preschool handicapped program of at least three hundred sixty minutes each week...

STATE REGULATION (A.A.C. R7-2-401)

G.2. In making a recommendation for special education placement, the participants in the IEP meeting shall ensure:

a. That special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment shall occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes, or in a building with nonhandicapped children, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be accomplished satisfactorily.

b. That a continuum of alternative placements is available to the child and that prior to placing the child, alternative placements ... are considered and documentation provided indicating the reasons for not selecting any placements that would be less restrictive.

c. That the child's placement results from and is based on the individualized education program;

d. That unless a handicapped child's IEP requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school which he would attend if not handicapped.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS

In 1972, the federal government mandated that Head Start programs enroll children with disabilities into their classrooms. Legislation requires that at least ten percent of the students at a Head Start Center be children with disabilities and that Head Start programs must take the necessary steps to ensure that these children are mainstreamed into all regular settings and services. Failure to meet the mainstreaming mandate jeopardizes Head Start programs. In Head Start programs, mainstreaming is defined as the integration of children with disabilities and children who are not disabled in the same classroom. Head Start is totally funded, i.e., no LEA funds are necessary for tables and chairs, climbing equipment, space, classroom materials, etc.

Until the passage of the Arizona preschool mandate, Head Start counted children with disabilities on a supplemental count which was submitted to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). The funding generated by that count went directly to the Head Start agencies from the ADE. They used those funds, along with some Head Start disability funds, to provide the required services to ensure FAPE. Since the mandate, ADE only allocates 619 and VI-B funds to LEAs, so we no longer give the dollars Head Start children generate directly to Head Start. Head Start continues to have a maintenance of effort requirement for the Head Start disability monies, but must rely on cooperation with the LEA to access 619 and VI-B funds generated by Head Start children.

Use of Head Start as a placement site maximizes the availability of services to children, and allows LEAs an opportunity to supplement limited state and federal dollars.

HEAD START PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEAs TO EXPAND THE CONTINUUM OF PLACEMENT OPTIONS

The use of Head Start as an integrated placement option may provide a means for a school district to meet state and federal requirements to provide services in the least restrictive environment appropriate for a child. It also allows the child to be served in the educational setting in which the child would be enrolled if not disabled without the district needing to establish classes for typically developing preschool children.

HEAD START PROVIDES SOME SERVICES WHICH LEAs DO NOT GENERALLY PROVIDE

Head Start provides a "comprehensive program", which means medical, nutritional, dental, mental health, and social services in addition to educational services. These services may also be provided by a school district through an IEP-related services requirement but are not common.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SETTINGS

Native American, Migrant, and Spanish-speaking communities generally have Head Start programs with staff who are fluent in the language of the children and trained by community standards. The children with disabilities remain with the children from their same communities.

HEAD START CHILDREN ARE LEA CHILDREN

LEAs are required to see that children with disabilities in Head Start settings are provided FAPE. This responsibility is at the same level as the requirement for school age children. If resources are scarce, children placed in Head Start have the same claim on those resources as third graders. Failure to provide FAPE to eligible children in Head Start has the same legal liability as failure to provide FAPE to a high school youngster.

Collaboration between the LEA and Head Start leads to

- Access to joint training provided either by Head Start or the LEA.
- Opportunities to develop compatible curricula so that children (disabled or typical) arrive at kindergarten "ready to learn."
- Transition into kindergarten for children, parents, and the school district is facilitated by shared experiences with special education.

FIFTH CIRCUIT COURT CASE - PRESCHOOL LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) issues (as they relate to preschool) have been addressed by the courts. The *Daniel R.R. vs. State Board of Education* decision was handed down in 1989. Daniel was a student in the El Paso, Texas early childhood special education program. The parents wanted Daniel to have interactions with typically developing children in order to have good role models for language and behavioral development. The Fifth Circuit Court overturned a district court decision which had held that the school district did not have to provide an integrated setting for Daniel if he were not able to meet the academic goals of a regular classroom. In supporting the integrated placement, the circuit court attempted to answer the following question:

How does one determine if a particular child should be mainstreamed?

To determine whether education in the regular classroom, with appropriate supports, can be achieved satisfactorily, the court weighed these issues:

1. Modifications in the regular classroom must be possible, including reasonable modifications of the curriculum and addition of a teacher's aide (if necessary). The Court pointed out, however, that "(t)he Act does not permit states to make mere token gestures to accommodate handicapped students; its requirement for modifying and supplementing regular education is broad."

2. The goals of the placement must not be merely academic but should consider benefits such as language and behavior models. The IEP should specify needs such as language development, behavior, socialization, and so forth, and then tie them to a regular education environment.

3. Any harm to the student from mainstreaming must be considered.

4. The impact of having that child in the regular education environment must be minimized by the development of a behavior management program if disruptive behavior is a problem, or by the use of a teacher's aide if the child requires that much additional instructional time. If the impact is too great, then the IEP committee will have to consider a different placement.

USE OF THE IEP IN PLACEMENT DECISIONS

The IEP is the document that drives the service delivery system for a particular child. It is also, however, the document used by monitors to verify statutory and regulatory compliance and by the auditors to verify service levels for funding. Therefore, it is important that the IEP accurately reflect the special education program in its entirety, including the special education that is delivered within the regular preschool program.

The IEP as a programmatic tool

The IEP is the result of a **process** designed to weave together the needs of the child and the provision of services intended to reduce or alleviate this need. There are several **sequential** steps in the IEP process:

1. Evaluation, including review of all information from other sources and subsequent eligibility determination;

2. Review of the evaluation results with the MDC team including parents, and discussion of the child's present levels of performance;

3. Identification of the child's strengths and abilities as well as needs and areas of concern;

4. Development of specific goals and objectives directly tied to the identified present levels of performance - **including acquisition, fluency, maintenance, and generalization of goals;**

5. Identification of the services and personnel which are necessary in order to assist the child in meeting each objective; and

6. Identification of the best setting/placement in which the services can be provided and where personnel have the most appropriate resources and opportunities available to carry out the objectives.

The objectives specified in an IEP should relate to mastery of functional skills. Mastery includes not only the ability to perform a skill under controlled circumstances, but also the ability to perform the skill within a normal daily routine. It is appropriate to include the four critical learning phases on the road to mastery. These phases are: acquisition, fluency, maintenance, and generalization.

In order for a child to obtain mastery after initially learning the new skill, there must be ample natural opportunities to practice the skill. Simply performing a task in isolation does not indicate that a child has mastered that skill. Evidence that the child is able to complete the task repeatedly and appropriately in a natural setting - which may be the home, the day care center, the Head Start program, or the school playground - is proof of mastery.

The IEP as verification for funding

Arizona statutes require that a child receive at least 360 minutes of special education **programming** in order for the district to claim the child for average daily membership (ADM). If the State wishes to verify that a district is actually providing this level of service to the children the district submits on its count, the state will look at IEPs for documentation. In this review, the monitors will verify

1) eligibility has been established,
2) the school district is providing (or ensuring the provision of) direct services to the child, and
3) the child is receiving at least the minimum number of minutes of service required.

This requirement has led many districts to assume that they must have direct contact between certified/licensed staff and a preschool child for at least 360 minutes per week in order to be eligible for ADM. This is not necessarily the case. For some children a certified special educator or therapist must be involved in the acquisition phase, probably involved in the fluency phase, and act as a consultant to other staff during the maintenance and generalization phases. For other children, 360 minutes (or more) of direct instruction by a special education teacher will be required in order for the IEP goals to be achieved. The IEP team makes this determination.

The amount of time that a child will be provided with activities related to fluency, maintenance, and generalization **should** be reported on the IEP. The IEP should also indicate the staff (Special Education teacher, Head Start teacher, Special Education aide, etc.) responsible for carrying out each portion of the IEP. Support to the child in these areas is an integral part of the special education program, even though the services may be provided by someone other than certified staff. Provision and documentation of a complete and appropriate program of services, provided in an effective manner, is necessary.

Summary

In an ADE memo dated January 7, 1992 Kathryn A. Lund, Special Education Director, and Gene Gardner, Director of School Finance, issued guidelines for funding children receiving special education services within a Head Start program. Those guidelines state that a child can be counted for BOTH federal and state monies under the following conditions:

1). The child must be receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

2). The child must have an IEP which specifies the need for at least **360** minutes a week of special education programming.

Special education programming must consist of some direct service (face-to-face instruction) by appropriately certified personnel at a level determined to be appropriate by the IEP team. The LEA must provide (pay for the provision of) this instruction.

The special education programming may also include opportunities for the child to practice and generalize, within integrated and naturalistic environments, the skills developed through work with special education personnel.

Consultation between the special educator (or related service provider) and the regular early childhood teacher may be part of the special education programming and, if so, should be indicated on the IEP. However, this consultation time may not be used to reduce the total time the child spends in the program to below 360 minutes a week.

3). The combination of these special education programming methods must be individually identified on the child's IEP.

A child should be counted by the LEA for only federal monies if the following conditions exist:

1). The child has an IEP in place and is receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE) **and**;

2) The child's IEP calls for less than 360 minutes a week of special education programming **or**;

The LEA does not provide (or pay for the provision of) any direct services to the child.

The provision of special education services by an LEA within a Head Start program may require a paradigm shift by both administration and instructional staff. However the results will yield

- programmatic benefits to children and families,
- fiscal benefits to school districts and Head Start programs, and
- compliance benefits to the districts, Head Starts, and the State.

In short, Head Start/LEA cooperation facilitates the provision of a free appropriate public education to the extent and with the spirit that is intended in our laws.

Appendix

Sample Memorandum of Understanding
and
Suggestions for Collaboration
between
Head Start Programs
and
Local School Districts

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

_____ SCHOOL DISTRICT

AND

_____ HEAD START PROGRAM

This Agreement is between (School District Name) and (Head Start Program Name) for the period of (date) to (date).

I. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish working procedures between (School District name) and (Head Start Program name) in the provision of services to preschool children eligible for special education in compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

It is the intent of this Agreement to:

1. Define which service will be provided by each Agency.

2. Ensure that children eligible for preschool special education services receive a free and appropriate public education, as required by law, in the least restrictive environment.

3. Ensure that each Agency cooperatively maintains communication and shares leadership responsibilities at the local level to ensure that available resources are utilized in the most effective manner.

4. Ensure that cooperative arrangements between (School District name) and (Head Start Program name) are developed, implemented, and preserved.

This Agreement applies only to preschool children three years old to kindergarten who are eligible for special education services.

II. Program Mandates:

Responsibility of School District:

1. Provide services to preschool children with disabilities on a mandatory basis following September 1991 (Expanded Requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended P.L. 102-119.)

2. Provide preschool children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) including the development and implementation of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) which includes all of the components of an IEP, procedural safeguards and the provision of related services.

3. Place preschool children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with an opportunity to interact with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

4. Work with appropriate community agencies to provide services to preschool children with disabilities.

Responsibility of Head Start Program:

1. Recruit, enroll and serve eligible children ages 3-5. No less than 10 percent of the total number of enrollment opportunities in Head Start Programs shall be available for children with disabilities who are eligible to participate (P.L. 92-424).

2. Screen all enrolled children for potential problems in the areas of health and development.

3. Refer children found to be at risk to appropriate professionals for diagnostic evaluation.

4. Develop and implement IEP for children with disabilities (with parent participation), based on diagnostic information.

5. Work closely with other community agencies in order to provide services to children with disabilities.

III. Program Description:

1. _____ School District (general identifying information including names and addresses of schools in the District required to provide services to preschool children with disabilities).

2. _____ Head Start Program (general identifying information to include names and addresses of centers located within the School District and the number of children served).

IV. Service Implementation (see attachment for suggested types of cooperation for each area listed):

1. Child Find/Screening

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

2. Referral for Evaluation

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

3. Comprehensive Evaluation

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

4. Individualized Education Program Development

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

5. Placement

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

6. Specific Program Service Delivery (to include transportation, therapy, and special educational resource)

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

7. Procedures for Hiring and Supervising Staff Providing Special Services

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

8. Procedures for Review/Monitoring Child's Progress

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

IV. Confidentiality

_____ School District and _____ Head Start Program shall follow the requirements outlined in the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA).

V. Training and Technical Assistance

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

VI. Counting and Reporting Children with Disabilities

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

VII. Transition Activities

_____ School District will:

a.
b.
c.

_____ Head Start will:

a.
b.
c.

VIII. Termination/Review

This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed and revised by (Program Title) and (Program Title) on an as needed basis or at least once annually. This Agreement may be terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days written notice.

_____	_____
Name, Title	Name, Title
Date: _____	Date: _____
_____	_____
Name, Title	Name, Title
Date: _____	Date: _____

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN HEAD START AND A SCHOOL DISTRICT

The following suggestions for collaboration were formulated as a result of a review of current written and verbal agreements in Arizona as well as telephone interviews with certain Head Start and school district program staff.

Local School Districts and Head Start Programs may wish to eliminate certain areas in the sample agreement which do not apply to their circumstances and may wish to add areas that address their unique needs.

From Sample Memorandum of Understanding

IV. 1. Child Find/Screening

School Districts are required to locate and identify all children with disabilities from birth to 21 years within their jurisdiction.

Head Start Programs are required to recruit children with suspected or diagnosed disabilities by conducting community needs assessments and contacting community agencies serving children with disabilities. Once enrolled, all Head Start children must be screened in areas of health and development.

School Districts and Head Start Programs may coordinate screening efforts by:

a. Sharing staff and facilities for joint screenings.

b. Coordinating the instruments and procedures to be used.

c. Informing and including parents in the screening process.

2. Referral for Evaluation

School Districts are required to provide evaluations of children with suspected disabilities by appropriate personnel using appropriate instruments.

Head Start Programs are required to refer children identified as "at risk" through screenings to appropriate personnel for diagnosis.

School Districts and Head Start Programs may plan together to coordinate referrals for evaluation by:

a. Developing referral packets and training staff in the use of them.

b. Sharing responsibility in the referral procedure (such as assisting parents with paperwork and informing parents of their rights).

c. Sharing report forms and diagnostic criteria.

3. Comprehensive Evaluation

School Districts are required to provide comprehensive evaluations of children who may require special education.

Head Start Programs are required to refer and obtain appropriate diagnosis for children determined to be "at risk." Some Head Start Programs have procedures for diagnosis through contracts with consultants or outside agencies.

School Districts and Head Start Programs may coordinate comprehensive evaluation efforts by:

a. Sharing evaluation resources when possible, for example:

(1) Head Start may provide the evaluations if the evaluations meet the requirements of school districts for the determination of eligibility for special education.

(2) Head Start may provide a member of the multidisciplinary evaluation team when Head Start is being considered as placement option.

b. Coordinating evaluation time lines for each Agency.

c. Coordinating sites and scheduling for comprehensive evaluations, for example:

(1) School District personnel may provide evaluations on-site at the Head Start Center.

(2) Head Start may be responsible for notifying parents about evaluations.

(3) Head Start may provide transportation to appointments at the School District.

d. Coordinating paperwork to assure evaluation results can be shared between agencies when appropriate, including parent permission regarding evaluation and sharing of evaluation information.

4. Individualized Education Program Development

School Districts are required to develop an IEP for children determined to be eligible for Special Education.

Head Start Programs are required to develop an IEP for children with diagnosed disabilities based on evaluation information.

School Districts and Head Start may coordinate the development of the IEP by:

a. Making decisions about forms to be used (if child is enrolled in Head Start and will remain in the program, Head Start forms may be used if they meet School District requirements).

b. Assuring the participation of appropriate Head Start staff as part of the IEP team and designating responsibility for notification of team members for meetings.

c. Facilitating the active involvement of parents by delineating responsibility for notification, explanation of the purpose for meeting, etc.

d. Coordinating paperwork and parental consent to assure IEP can be shared.

e. Coordinating the IEP Review to assure participation by both agencies.

5. Placement

School Districts are required to place preschool children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment appropriate with an opportunity to interact with nondisabled peers as appropriate.

Head Start Programs are required to provide services for children with disabilities in a mainstream environment.

School Districts and Head Start Programs may work cooperatively in regard to placement by considering the following options:

a. School Districts make every effort to place children in Head Start if it is determined appropriate by the IEP team.

b. School Districts refer children with disabilities to the Head Start Program as a placement option.

In this case, the following must be discussed or developed:

(1) Number of slots Head Start can "save" for placement.

(2) Eligibility criteria for Head Start enrollees.

(3) Referral procedures to the Head Start Program (contact persons, etc.).

(4) Information packet about Head Start for parents.

c. Child is jointly enrolled in School District and Head Start Programs. (This is a viable alternative when Head Start programs are located on school

district campuses; otherwise LRE considerations may preclude joint enrollment.)

6. Specific Program Service Delivery

School Districts are required to provide all services designated in the child's IEP.

Head Start Programs are required to seek out related services in the community for children with disabilities.

School Districts and Head Start Programs may coordinate services to children with disabilities by considering the following options:

a. School Districts provide special education resource teachers and therapists on-site at the Head Start Programs. Head Starts make scheduling arrangements as needed.

b. School Districts reimburse Head Start Programs for salaries of necessary special educators and therapists.

c. In some cases, related services cannot be provided on-site at Head Start Programs. Therefore, arrangements for transporting children to a specific site for special services must be made.

d. Coordinating transportation services.

7. Procedures for Hiring and Supervising Staff Providing Special Services

School Districts and Head Start Programs may coordinate efforts by considering the following options:

a. School District hires and supervises staff.

b. Head Start hires and supervises staff and is reimbursed through the School District.

c. School District and Head Start form a team to hire and supervise staff, and procedures are developed.

8. Procedures for Review/Monitoring Child's Progress

School Districts and Head Start Programs may coordinate efforts by:

a. Developing procedures and forms for reporting attendance.

b. Developing procedures for progress reports and periodic consultation with Head Start staff by those providing related services.

c. Designating responsibility for coordination of staffings and IEP review meetings.

V. Training and Technical Assistance

School Districts and Head Start Programs are required to provide ongoing training for staff to increase their knowledge and ability to provide quality services to children with disabilities.

School Districts and Head Start Programs may coordinate efforts by:

1. Developing a system for staff needs assessment in the area of training.
2. Coordinating training calendars.
3. Training staff regarding the regulations and program philosophy of each agency.
4. Inviting staff from each agency to share training activities.
5. Planning joint training activities.

VI. Counting and Reporting

School Districts and Head Start Programs have systems for counting and reporting children with disabilities. Efforts may be coordinated by:

1. Training staff regarding specific procedures and regulations for each Agency.
2. Developing a system so that time lines and persons responsible for reporting are clear.

VII. Transition

Transition efforts from Head Start for kindergarten eligibility may be coordinated by:

1. Developing a process for sharing information.
2. Training about the School District program and expectations for staff and families.
3. Offering visits to Head Start children and families at the receiving programs.
4. Developing special transition forms if necessary.
5. Developing time lines for transition activities.